



# NEWS RELEASE

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**District:** District 4 - Oakland  
**Contact:** Allyn Amsk  
**Phone:** (510) 286-5445

John Goodwin  
(510) 817-5862

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### REGIONAL MEASURE 2 FUNDED PROJECT BRINGS CONGESTION RELIEF FOR BAY AREA MOTORISTS

**CONTRA COSTA COUNTY** - Relief began today for 60,000 daily commuters on Interstate 80 in Hercules, with the opening of the final portion of the eastbound High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane, which extends the HOV lane from State Route 4 to the Carquinez Bridge. Today, Caltrans and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) celebrated the opening of the 4.7 mile project.

"This project will help relieve traffic congestion and improve the quality of life for Bay Area commuters," said Caltrans District Director Bijan Sartipi.

The project includes \$36 million in construction capital from Regional Measure 2 (RM 2), which was approved by Bay Area voters in 2004. RM 2 seeks to reduce congestion in crowded bridge corridors. The measure increased tolls on state-owned Bay Area bridges by \$1 to pay for a series of projects listed in the "Regional Traffic Relief Plan."

Two segments on westbound I- 80 between State Route 4 and State Route 29 were completed in 2007.

"The real credit for this project goes to Bay Area voters," said MTC Vice Chair and Orinda City Councilmember Amy Rein Worth. "Year after year, in good economic times and bad, the people of the Bay Area rank transportation as one of their highest priorities and biggest concerns. Completion of the eastbound HOV lane is an important step in our overall plan to reduce or manage congestion in the San Francisco Bay Area."

In addition to a new HOV lane, the project realigned the eastbound on-ramp at State Route 4, widened the Willow Avenue Undercrossing, constructed a new structure for the eastbound Willow Avenue off-ramp, modified the eastbound off and on-ramps at Cummings Skyway, constructed retaining walls, resurfaced existing eastbound lanes with asphalt concrete, replaced concrete slabs, and constructed ramp metering facilities.





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Commuters should be aware that drivers in the HOV lanes at the Carquinez Bridge toll plaza are required to have a FasTrak tag (transponder) in order to use the HOV lanes and pay the discounted toll. HOVs cannot pay their toll with cash. HOVs continuing east on Interstate 80 beyond State Route 29 would approach the toll plaza in the far left lane and use the far left toll booth. HOVs heading to the State Route 29 exit would approach the toll plaza in the second lane from left and use toll booth #5 (near the middle). The toll for HOVs is \$2.50 during HOV hours. Drivers may sign up for FasTrak tags at a variety of retail and online locations.

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